**Stoppage of Gitanjali Express at Wardha Railway Station**

3666. SHRI VIJAY ANNAJI MUDE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any assurance was given to the people of Wardha to provide the stoppage of Gitanjali Express at Wardha railway station;

(b) if so, the efforts made by the Government in this regard; and

(c) the time by which a stoppage is likely to be provided at Wardha railway station?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (c) Stoppage of 2859/2860 Gitanjali Express at Wardha Jn. Has been examined but found neither operationally feasible nor desirable as existing trains are considered adequate to cater to the present level of traffic offering at this station.

*[English]*

**White Paper on CERC**

3667. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Working Group on Power (NWGP) has demanded a white paper from the Union Government on the proposed reforms in the Power Sector including the setting up of our independent regulatory body, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC);

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the Government's response thereto;

(c) whether NWGP has pointed out that without adequate planning the power sector has experienced a slaggist growth in the Eighth Plan;

(d) if so, the facts in this regard; and

(e) the action taken or proposed to be taken in the matter by the Government to increase the budgetary support for the power sector and also to enhance the rate for PSUs in power sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) to (d) Various agencies involved in the power sector including National Working Group on Power are urging the Government to expeditiously attend to the need of reforming and restructuring of the power sector including the State Electricity Boards. The Government have examined in detail the restructuring needs of the power sector and propose to introduce a bill to set up a Central Electricity Regulatory Commission in the Centre and State Electricity Regulatory Commissions in the States. Taking into account the changing scenario in the power sector and the poor financial position of State Electricity Boards, Government have adopted a Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power after extensive discussions with the State Governments. The action plan forms the basis for improving the performance of the power sector.

(e) Ninth plan Programmes is under finalisation. However, to accelerate the generation programme and to optimize the existing capacity, additional budgetary support to the public sector including Public Sector Undertakings has been proposed for 1997-98.

**Introduction of Paper based Flooring**

3668. SHRI SOMJIBHAI DAMOR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether R.D.S.O. has received any proposal to introduce paper based flooring laminates as substitute of wood/ plywood;

(b) the details and the present status of the proposal;

(c) the time by which it is likely to be introduced; and

(d) the other alternatives of wood/plywood being contemplated by the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) M/s. Greenply Industries, Calcutta had offered paper based laminates as a replacement of wood based products. Samples were supplied for testing by firm in May' 97. Test results thereof have been received recently and are under evaluation. Introduction of product would depend upon compliance with the laid creteria.

(d) Materials like natural fibre based laminates and cement based board are under study.

**Wages to Telegraphists**

3669. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have stopped the payment of increased hourly wage to the short duty Telegraphists at Central Telegraph Offices and Departmental Telegraph Offices;

(b) if so, the details and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have received representation for its restoration;

(d) if so the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.